

**In the Claims**

1. (Previously Presented) A method for examining a pruritic disease to diagnose opioid-based pruritis, comprising the steps of:

measuring concentrations of  $\kappa$ -opioid peptides and  $\mu$ -opioid peptides, in serum,  
calculating the ratio of said concentrations of  $\mu$ -opioid peptides to the concentration of  $\kappa$ -opioid peptides,  
comparing said calculated ratio to a corresponding ratio in non-pruritic patients; and  
diagnosing opioid-based pruritis where said calculated ratio is greater than said corresponding ratio.

2. – 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said  $\mu$ -opioid peptide to be measured is  $\beta$ -endorphin and said  $\kappa$ -opioid peptide is dynorphin A.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said pruritic disease is selected from the group consisting of pruritus with atopic dermatitis, neurodermatitis, contact dermatitis, seborrheic dermatitis, autosensitization dermatitis, caterpillar dermatitis, asteatosis, senile pruritus, insect bite, hyperesthesia optica, urticaria, prurigo, herpes, impetigo, eczema, tinea, lichen, psoriasis, scabies, acne vulgaris, malignant tumor, diabetes, hepatic disease, and renal failure, hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis or pregnancy.

7. - 11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said pruritic disease is selected from the group consisting of atopic dermatitis, and renal failure, ~~hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis~~.

13. (Cancelled)